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RESPONSE

A Report on Actions for A Better Environment

NO. 11

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RESPONSE is a periodic report from the United States Department of Agriculture on USDA's many areas of action to remedy environmental problems. Department programs protect and improve the environment through research, forestry, conservation and a wide range of rural and community services.

FORESTRY
ADVISORY
RECOMMENDATIONS

The National Advisory Committee on State and Private Forestry this month recommended increasing education and program efforts to improve production of wood, water, wildlife, and other environmental values on forests owned by four million small private landowners. Committee recommendations included a call for: Greater public information on the need for improved forestry practices on public and private lands; increased incentives to landowners to add to and improve forest resources to meet future demand and increased federal assistance to States during times of extreme forest fire dangers.

NEW STRAIN
OF SCREWWORMS

Screwworm eradication, USDA's most successful biological control program to date, received a boost this month with the first release (over Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands) of a new strain of sterile screwworm flies. These more aggressive, stronger flying insects survive the drop well, the better to mate with native females and assure another generation of no-hatch screwworm eggs.

BIG DEAL

The largest single-owner purchase of land made in the history of the National Forest System occurred this month with the sale of 10,452 acres of Lake Tahoe shoreline property in Nevada for inclusion in the Toiyabe National Forest. The purchase is part of a long-term effort by Forest Service to protect the sensitive environment of the Lake Tahoe Basin from a crush of overdevelopment and provide greater public access to the lake.

DDT ACTION

Early this month Environmental Protection Agency administrator, William D. Ruckelshaus, limited the use of the basic DDT compound to pesticide products which are federally registered for interstate sale or intended for export. This significant action gives added federal control to prevent the production of contraband DDT. For details surrounding this action write to the editor of RESPONSE.

IN SEARCH OF
THE CITY TREE

City trees should grow to desired heights; tolerate air pollution, salt, bumps from cars and drought; resist diseases, insects; and not clog sewers or crack pavement. They should provide shade and be beautiful. To date the sycamore has come closest to meeting many of these standards. Frank S. Santamour Jr., a research geneticist at the National Arboretum believes a super-city tree is possible and since mid-1967 he has been working to develop better varieties of urban trees. At present he is cross-breeding 20 different kinds of trees in search of one that can best withstand the urban life of the 20th Century. ARS

CUTTING BACK
ON SLASH

Woody residues in forests are good when they contribute nutrients to the soil, provide shade for seedling trees, offer habitat for wildlife, and regulate water runoff. They are bad when they increase the danger of forest fires and impede good management and recreation access. Logging slash left in the forests and large areas of blown down timber present problems of disposal, and burning is no longer environmentally satisfactory. A new Forest Service research effort will explore ways to utilize this woody residue, control fires, and dispose what cannot be utilized. Cooperating in the program are: several National Forests in the Pacific Northwest; the Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin; FS Equipment Development Centers; State and private organizations and individuals.

ENVIRONMENT
RESTORED

The story of how watershed protection and flood prevention measures are restoring the environment in North Mississippi is now available. The full-color Forest Service publication summarizes the accomplishments of the Yazoo-Little Tallahatchie Flood Prevention Project since its inception in 1944. Copies may be obtained from the Project Manager, U. S. Forest Service, Y-IT Project, P. O. Box 69, Oxford, Mississippi 38655.

ECO-SHORTCOURSE

Forest Service personnel selected from names submitted by regional foresters and stations, area and unit division directors are taking part in ecosystems management short-courses at the Colorado State University. The coursework is designed to present current knowledge on how best to allocate uses of renewable wildland resources.

SEE THE
REMOTE
WEST

"The Look of Our Land, An Airphoto Atlas of the Rural United States: Mountains and Deserts," (AH-409) is a 68-page catalog of airphotos of parts of the 11 Western States of Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, Texas, Montana, Wyoming and Idaho. Brief statements on land use, elevation and topography, climate, water, and soil accompany the photographs. This would be of interest to people concerned with the condition, the use of and the characteristics of wilderness and low-population (mountain and desert) areas of the west. For a copy send \$1 to the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. ERS

ANIMAL AND PLANT
HEALTH SERVICE

The USDA operates a new regulatory agency, the Animal and Plant Health Service (APHS). It is made up of many of the important environmental services of the Agricultural Research Service, namely the divisions dealing with animal health, veterinary biologics, plant protection, agricultural quarantine inspection.

NEW MAXIMUM
QUARANTINE
STATION

Fleming Key, off Key West, Florida, was designated this month by Secretary Butz as a high security quarantine station for animal importations from any country in the world, including those where foot-and-mouth disease exists. Thanks to this facility the United States can acquire exotic breeding stock from places not previously accessible with which to improve U. S. breeds and production efficiency. The first importations will be limited to cattle. Animals will arrive at the 16-acre, 500 head capacity site for 5 months of rigid quarantine and testing prior to all being sent to the mainland. APHS

SPOTS
LAND-USE
CHANGES

With the help of remote sensing devices Economic Research Service was able to prepare a report on land use changes of the last two decades in the Southern Mississippi Alluvial Valley. Biggest change was a 37 percent gain in cropland which now is 57 percent of the total 13.7 million acres of the valley's 24 million acres. Forest land diminished from 11.5 million acres to 7.5 million between 1950 and 1969. A copy of "Land Use Change in the Southern Mississippi Alluvial Valley, 1950-1969--An Analysis Based on Remote Sensing," is available upon request to the editor of RESPONSE.

SCREWWORM
OUTBREAKS

Screwworm outbreaks in the Southwest went over the 400 mark (by mid-November) making 1971 the worst year since 1969 for the screwworm eradication program. Ideal weather conditions for the development of screwworms and the probable introduction of an infested animal or animals are credited with the rise in outbreaks. The screwworm eradication program (involving the production and release of sterile male flies to mate with native fly populations) continues to be highly effective in preventing and stemming outbreaks.

HELP

Environmental groups concerned with education and citizen action projects may find the Forest Service publication "Help for Environmental Programs" of interest. It briefly lists private, governmental and library sources of information. Single copies are available from the editor of RESPONSE upon request.

TOWARD A
NEW ETHIC

The publication, "Toward A New Environmental Ethic," was recently released by the Environmental Protection Agency. It gives a good run-down of current actions by EPA and of that agencies accomplishments to date, including setting standards and enforcement. For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (price 60 cents). Allow for delayed delivery. (stock number 5500-0031) A second EPA publication, "Environmental Protection--1971" provides a more detailed review of the work of the agency in 1970 into 1971. Single copies are available upon request to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Public Information, Washington, D.C. 20460.

PLEASE
DON'T EAT
THE TREES

Genetically resistant seedlings may provide a useful alternative to chemical repellents for reducing damage by deer and hare in planted Douglas-fir forests. Forest Service research detected such resistance **in ponderosa** pine as far back as 1927 and confirmed it in 1962. Recent work in the Pacific Northwest proves both the presence and the heritability of resistance traits in Douglas-fir. Unlike artificial repellents, resistant trees could provide year-round protection for as long as needed. However, it may take a decade to intensify resistance or to breed seedling stock in the amounts required. Physiological research is underway to determine chemical factors underlying resistance.

ANIMAL WASTES
MANAGEMENT

Cornell University will hold a national Agricultural Waste Management Conference January 31 and February 1 and 2, 1972 at the Hotel Syracuse, Syracuse, New York. It will focus on research dealing with the management of agricultural wastes and the application of the results. Land disposal, legal and enforcement regulations, nutrient control, treatment and disposal, and management principles will be emphasized. For futher information contact Professor Raymond C. Loehr, Program Chairman, 207 Riley Robb, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 14850. Meanwhile, the conference compendium of the Symposium on Animal Waste Management (meeting at Airlie House, Warrenton, Virginia held earlier this year) will be available for purchase in late February. Inquiries should be addressed to: The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Office of the Secretary, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.